

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1. (Cancelled) A food, a beverage or a pharmaceutical composition containing astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof as an active ingredient, and having a circadian rhythm normalizing action.

Claim 2. (Cancelled) A food, a beverage or a pharmaceutical composition containing astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof as an active ingredient, and aimed at preventing and alleviating sleep disorder and various diseases due to disturbance of a circadian rhythm.

Claim 3. (Cancelled) A food, a beverage or a pharmaceutical composition containing astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof, and adapted to enhance a hypnotic action and/or a circadian rhythm normalizing action of melatonin owing to protection of endogenous melatonin by the astaxanthin and/or ester thereof, and to produce actions of preventing and alleviating sleep disorder and various diseases due to disturbance of a circadian rhythm.

Claim 4. (Cancelled) A composition for normalizing circadian rhythm which comprises astaxanthin and/or ester thereof and melatonin.

Claim 5. (Cancelled) A composition containing astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof, for suppression of degradation of in vivo melatonin by the astaxanthin and/or ester thereof.

Claim 6. (Cancelled) A method of normalizing circadian rhythm by administering to a patient suffering from disturbance of circadian rhythm, an effective amount of astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof.

Claim 7. (Cancelled) A method of alleviating sleep disorder and various diseases due to disturbance of circadian rhythm by administering to a patient in need of prevention and alleviation of said sleep disorder, an effective amount of astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof.

Claim 8. (Previously Presented) A method of normalizing circadian rhythm by administering to a patient suffering from disturbance of circadian rhythm, an effective amount of astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof, and an effective amount of melatonin.

Claim 9. (Currently Amended) A method of suppressing degradation of in vivo melatonin by administering to a patient suffering from disturbance of circadian rhythm, an effective amount of astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof to suppress degradation of in vivo melatonin.

Claim 10. (New) The method of claim 8 wherein said effective amount of astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof ranges from 0.5-500 mg/day.

Claim 11. (New) The method of claim 8 wherein said effective amount of astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof ranges from 5-50 mg/day.

Claim 12. (New) The method of claim 9 wherein said effective amount of astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof ranges from 0.5-500 mg/day.

Claim 13. (New) The method of claim 9 wherein said effective amount of astaxanthin and/or an ester thereof ranges from 5-50 mg/day.